RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 28th March, 1990/ Chaitra, 1912 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*221. [*The questioners (Shri N.E. Balaram and Shri Chaturanan Mishra) were absent. For answer vide* col. 38 *infra.*]

Assurance to EPRLF Leaders for Asylum in India

*222. SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI†
SHRI PASUMPON THAKIRUTTINAN :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka or RAW or any other Agency of Government had recently given an assurance to the EPRLF that their top leaders would be given asylum in India after the total deinduction of the IPKF from Sri Lanka ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) the number of persons so far brought over to India;

(d) whether steps have been taken to ensure that they would not indulge in violence in India during their sojourn; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) While no specific assurances were given, in keeping with India's humanitarian traditions, we have never refused entry to refugees who, as in the present case, felt that their lives were at risk. Keeping in mind these humanitarian considerations and after consultations with the Sri Lanka Government, 1612 Sri Lankan refugees were brought by sea and air, to India.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Proper security measures are taken in all refugees camps to ensure that the refugees abide by our laws. These measures are equally applicable to the camps in Koraput district, Orissa. Concerned State Governments have also been asked to tighten security measures to prevent any unlawful activities by refugees not staying in camps.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not satisfied with the answer given in the statement. We all know that the EPRLF is the adopted child of the former Government. According to Phase-I of the Research and Analysis Wing, they created the Tamil Nation Army in North Eastern province of Sri Lanka thinking that they could fill in the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the IPKF. So, they financed them, armed them and trained them. *The Hindu* newspaper ridiculed the TNA as the pious army created by forcible conscription of ethnic and school children but it was a flop and failure. It is also true that 1600 people belonging to a particular militant group have been taken in our own ship to Orissa. The newspaper reports clearly say, many of them have AK-47 rifles and other weapons. (*Interruptions*). I have to tell my opinion. They cannot come under the category of refugees.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Put your question. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : I am coming to the question, Sir. Knowing well that they are armed with sophisticated

† The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri S. Viduthalai Virumbi.

weapons, what is the extraordinary reason for bringing them in our ships? Is this due to the fact that these people were given the patronage by the RAW?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, fortunately, one chapter of the Indo-Sri Lankan relations is over when the IPKF has been completely deinducted. Obviously, the situation that has arisen over here has a certain fall-out and one of the fall-outs is that some people have taken refuge in our country as a humanitarian country and as a country which attaches importance to compassion. We have been giving refuge to several people. Today these 1600 people have come but even earlier, there are approximately 90,000 people already in our country who had come in earlier phases. Therefore, I do not think we should look at it in any other sense than humanitarian sense. So far as arms are concerned, naturally, we are concerned and we shall see to it that arms are not available with anybody. Due searches are taking place from time to time and I hope both the State Government of Tamil Nadu and the State Government of Orissa will be very cognizant of the fact.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : Now, Sir, I put my second supplementary. From the answer he has given, they will see that the arms are not available with them. According to Phase-II programme of the Research and Analysis Wing, they promised the EPRLF and other militant groups to give asylum to the leaders and their families in India and subsequently to train them in Southern States of India. For what purpose? If there is God, only God and the RAW know about it. We all know the Phase-I programme of RAW did not materialise and ended in failure. I would like to know whether Phase-II of the RAW is still alive. The hon. Minister may say no to this question. (*Interruption*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are giving reply on behalf of the Minister. Please put your question. You are not supposed to reply on his behalf.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : This plan was drafted by the previous regime. May I get a categorical reply from the hon. Minister whether the Phase-II programme of the RAW has been dropped or not?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, I am personally not aware of what he says about Phase I and II. But I can tell him about Phase-III and Phase-III is very good cordial relationship with Sri Lanka.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, hon. Minister should not hesitate to tell the truth to this hon. House that these schemes of bringing militants from Sri Lanka to India and training them in India were inheritance from the previous Government. I request the hon. Minister to be candid and reply to the question put by my hon. colleague as to what the extraordinary reasons are. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : Just a minute. We always presume that the Minister replies sincerely, correctly, and there is no hesitation from the Minister.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : The question put by my colleague is : What are the extraordinary reasons for bringing the militant groups in our own ships and aircraft ? My supplementary would be, in the name of refugees, the EPRLF cadres have entered into India. Now they are given asylum at Malkangiri, Orissa. Some important leaders of the EPRLF, Mr. Selvarathna, Mr. Kirubakaran and two ministers of the North-Eastern Provincial Council and

Mr. K. Padmanabha, the General Secretary of the EPRLF, are also at Malkangiri. According to a news report, they have said : "We wanted to meet members of various other Tamil groups stationed near Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu and would like to discuss future course of actions." It is also reported that a number of EPRLF cadres who have come in the name of refugees have escaped from the tightly guarded transit camp at Malkangiri. It is further reported... (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : Kindly put your supplementary.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : ...some weapons like AK-47 rifles and transmitters are all found concealed in the luggage of the refugees. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : You put your supplementary, please.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : I am coming to it. I am framing my question, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I will not permit such long long reading. Put your supplementary. Otherwise, I will pass on to the next supplementary.

SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN : When it was asked why the refugees were allowed to carry the transmitters and weapons, an official in the camp said that the security rules were relaxed both at Sri Lankan and Indian ports... (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN : What is your question? Please put your question. Otherwise, I will pass on to the next question. I will not permit you to go on reading. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PASUMPON THA. RUTTINAN : In view of these, I would like to know from the Minister whether these reports are true. If so, why the refugees are allowed to bring powerful weapons like AK-47 rifles, and transmitters into India and, who had instructed the officials, whether it is Government or the RAW to relax Security Rules and Customs Rules... (*Interruptions*).

श्री बिठ्ठलराव माधवराव जाधव : सर, यह स्टेटमेण्ट दे रहे हैं प्रश्न पूछने के बजाय। ...(व्यवधान) ...

MR. CHAIRMAN : You are not the Minister. The Minister has to reply. (*Interruptions*). On this side, people still think they are Ministers. (*Interruptions*). Habits die hard. You still think you are in Government and they still think they are in Opposition.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, habits die so hard that ...(*Interruptions*)...we have to save them all the time.

MR. CHAIRMAN : He is capable of taking care of himself.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, I want to dispel one impression. Whatever the past history, between the two different groups, the LTTE and the EPRLF and many others, the present Government of India is not going to get sucked into those controversies. The present Government of India wants to leave it to Sri Lankans to decide their own fate.

I want to make it very clear that so far as LTTE is concerned or any other group is concerned, they are as dear and as friendly to us as anybody else. We have no preferences. We have no favourites.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri K.C. Lenka.

SHRI KAHNU CHARAN LENKA : Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, you are denying...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN : If there is a long winded question, I do not want to allow any question. He has answered. According to me, he has given a full answer please.

SHRI T. R. BALU : He has not answered full...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri K.C. Lenka.

SHRI KAHNU CHARAN LENKA : Sri Lankan Tamil refugees were denied by you to land at Tamil Nadu. They were given shelter in Koraput district of Orissa on humanitarian grounds. I want to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has refused to accept these Tamil refugees despite the request of the P.M. If so, why? Will the Minister kindly tell, keeping the mass agitation now in Orissa when the Tamil refugees will be withdrawn from Orissa to stop this agitation?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : I can well understand the difficulties of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister. And the difficulties are that he is already burdened with about 19,000 refugees.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY : But that was not the question. The question is whether he has refused to take them or not?

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Let me reply...(*Interruptions*).

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Don't try to justify it. Your request was not acceded to by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He said that.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, if they don't want to listen my reply, what can I do ?...(*Interruptions*)

My reply is, and as I said, that I can well appreciate the difficulties of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister. He is already burdened with a heavy load and he did not want an additional load, that is understandable. That is why he has said it. But one thing I can assure that both the Governments of Orissa and Tamil Nadu said that they have no intention of keeping any additional refugees at all. Therefore, the real question is how we can create and expect the Sri Lankan Government to create an atmosphere where all these 19,000 refugees and those in Orissa can go back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has asked about the agitation in Orissa.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: I said both, Sir. In Orissa, 16,000 refugees are there. Therefore, we are keen that the circumstances should be such that both can go back.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shrimati Margaret Alva.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that because of the changed policy the refugees who had started going back to Sri Lanka over the last few months—since the change of Government, the reverse trend has started—have started coming out of Sri Lanka because of the fear that after the withdrawal of the IPKF is completed, they will be thrown to the mercy of the Sinhalese army because of which the return of the refugees to India has started. Sir, based on this, I would like to ask the hon. Minister—after all, refugees do not come on our invitation, Sir, and they come because of the circumstances on the other side because of that, they are compelled to come and if such refugees keep on coming and their number increases because of of that situation—whether it is his policy that in view of all that is

being said between them and the Sri Lankan Government, they will not accept them and turn them back when they land in Tamil Nadu or somewhere else. And what is going to be their policy on this question ? India is known to have accepted people who come and not turn them out when they come from wherever they come.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, my hon. friend has thought that the deinduction of IPKF was started by this Government. It was not. It was started by the previous Government.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: I am talking about the total withdrawal.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Give me a minute. We have only completed the process, and I can say with a great deal of pride, if I may say so, we have completed the process with honour and dignity. And, Sir, the Army has come out with a great deal of laurels to itself which has made India proud.

So far as the situation that has now arisen is concerned, I think my honourable friends will appreciate that the internal situation in Sri Lanka has been such for so many years that it will take time for them to settle down and the indications that we are getting now are that they are settling down. There is no such flood of refugees. Up till now, our figures are very low and I am hoping and expecting that the Sri Lankan Government will look after their own people as it is their responsibility and will see to it that they live in security and in dignity.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, he has not answered my question. I asked as to what would happen to those people who will be landing here after the withdrawal of the IPKF. He has not replied.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, the main point that I am making—she is asking me a question which it is not for me to reply to—is that I am only saying that India's hospitality does not mean an open door... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: What will happen in the future ? When they come here, you will turn them back ?...(*Interruptions*) ...

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, I do not want to elaborate.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Sir, my question is what will happen in the future...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let the occasion arise. Yes, Mr. Sukomal Sen.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, my question is very simple. I want to know one thing from the honourable Minister. It is being said that the refugees who have landed in Orissa are militants and that they belong to a particular political group in Sri Lanka; I do not know. But I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether really those refugees who have landed in Orissa are having political affiliations and, if so, what their affiliations are.

Secondly, Sir, already the number of refugees in India is large. What is the immediate possibility of repatriation of these refugees ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, the 1,600 odd refugees who came to Orissa belong to one sector or the other of the East there, the Eastern administration, the local Government. Some of them were office-bearers and some of them were bureaucrats. On their arrival in Orissa they were searched. They were searched before being put on the ship and also after landing

and we tried to ensure that arms were not there. So far as going back is concerned, not only these 1,600 odd people, but also the ninety thousand people who are there in various parts of Tamil Nadu, will go and we are hoping that circumstances would soon be created in Sri Lanka when they can go back.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN : Sir, I want to ask the honourable Minister, out of these 1,612 refugees, Sri Lankan refugees, how many of them are women and how many of them are children. I am asking this question because there are various Press reports and the Press report that I have read says that many of them are women and children and they are not armed militants....*(Interruptions)*... which is the reason given by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister for rejecting them in Tamil Nadu. I would like the honourable Minister to tell me how many of them are women and how many of them are children and when they landed here, why they were prevented from landing in Tamil Nadu...*(Interruptions)*...

Secondly, Sir, he says—this is part (b) of my question—that the IPKF came back with dignity and laurels...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No arguments please...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, part (b) of my question is this: Is the honourable Minister aware that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister boycotted the function to receive the IPKF at Madras and what is his reaction to it ?... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN:Sir, how is this relecant ?...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Sir, how is this relevant ?... *(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: You please listen to me... *(Interruptions)*...Please listen to what I am saying.

SHRI T. R. BALU: Sir, how is this question relevant ?...*(Interruptions)*...How is it relevant ?... *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Why do you people jump ? I am here; I am sitting here...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: I do not know why they are interrupting. Is the term "Tamil Nadu Chief Minister" unparliamentary or what ?...*(Interruptions)*...Sir, part (b) of my question is not yet finished...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: We do not discuss here who attended which function...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, I am on something else... *(Interruptions)*...I am on something else. Sir, part (b) of my question to the honourable Minister is very relevant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now you come to the relevant question.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, the DMK is one of the constituents of the National Front...*(Interruptions)*...Sir, the DMK is one of the constituents of the National Front. Sir, in that capacity, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has said that the IPKF had been killing all the people in Sri Lanka ... *(Interruptions)* ... after the recent DMK regional conference. Is the honourable Minister aware of this statement of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and, if so, what is his reaction to it ?...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN: Sir, we want to know the relevance of this question ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Sir, the honourable lady Member has asked for the break-up of the figure of refugees who came to Orissa. There are 859 men, 353 ladies and 400 children. This is the breakup of the 1612. So far as the function held at the arrival of the IPKF in Madras is concerned, the Tamil Nadu Government was represented by the Governor himself.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Subramanian Swamy.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY : I hope he doesn't regard me as a Tamil militant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your name shows that you are a militant. Your name is militant, Subramanian.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: How can a Swamy be a militant ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: But he is double: Subramanian, Kartikeya, he is a war lord.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: War lord is of a bad significance.

The Minister has just now said that we have completed the Congress-(I) agreement on de-induction with honour and dignity. The last time when such phrases were used was when Chamberlain returned from Munich. And I am not going into the question of what they have done or what they had agreed to do. The question is today there is a widespread speculation as to what happened to the former Chief Minister, Mr. Varadarajan Perumal. Is he in Orissa or is he in Tamil Nadu or half-way somewhere below ?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: Mr. Perumal is a citizen of Sri Lanka. He is a passport-holder of Sri Lanka. He is not in India.

Weeding out of sympathisers of terrorists in Doordarshan and AIR in Srinagar

*223. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the presence of sympathisers of terrorists in Doordarshan and AIR in Srinagar;

(b) whether the obituary of Shri Lassa Kaul, Station Director of Doordarshan, Srinagar, which was carried both by Doordarshan and AIR, had described the killing as an accident and not a word of condemnation was said against the killers;

(c) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to weed out such subversive elements; and

(d) if no steps have been taken so far in this regard, what are the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

News regarding assasination of Shri Lassa Kaul, Station Director, Doordarshan Kendra, Srinagar on 13-2-1990 was telecast in both the national evening bulletins telecast at 8.40 P.M. and 9·30 P.M. on the same day. The story mentioned that he was shot dead by unidentified gunmen. The bulletin also traced his distinguished career in AIR and the shock and grief expressed by Shri P. Upendra, Minister Information, and Broadcasting at the killing. This was also carried on these bulletins. The killing of Shri Kaul was mentioned prominently in the news